CLAIMS

1.   A method for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line educational system and toggle between course and author views, comprising:

selectively displaying a course view in response to selection of a course section and displaying an author view in response to selection of an author section, the course view containing content for the on-line course and the author view permitting the instructor to develop the on-line course;

receiving content for the on-line course while displaying the author view, including:

receiving an identification of units each representing portions of an educational course;

receiving an identification of assignments for the units; and

receiving an identification of educational materials for the units; and

compiling the units, the assignments, and the educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course.

2.   The method of claim 1, further including displaying a navigation tree in both the course view and the author view, the navigation tree permitting the instructor to access the units.

3.   The method of claim 1, further including displaying course tools in both the course view and the author view, the course tools permitting the instructor to access teaching tools for the units.

4.   The method of claim 3 wherein the displaying course tools step includes:

displaying a gradebook section for accessing an on-line gradebook;

displaying a course administration section for accessing administrative pages related to the on-line course;

displaying an e-mail section for accessing an e-mail feature;

displaying a chat section for accessing a chat feature;

displaying a document sharing section for accessing a document sharing feature;

displaying a journal section for accessing an on-line journal; or

displaying a links section for accessing links illustrating sources of information relevant to the on-line educational course.

5.   A method for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line educational system, comprising:

displaying a default syllabus identifying default units representing portions of an educational course;

receiving an identification of additional units each representing additional portions of the educational course;

receiving an identification of assignments for the additional units;

receiving an identification of educational materials for the additional units; and

compiling the default units, the additional units, the assignments, and the educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course.

6.   The method of claim 5, further including selectively providing on-line access to the electronic syllabus by the users.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein the receiving the identification of the assignments step includes receiving a threaded discussion assignment, a reading assignment, a lecture assignment, an indication of a file to be downloaded, or an address identifying a network location of additional content for the educational course.

8. The method of claim 5, further including receiving an on-line exam.

9. The method of claim 5 wherein the receiving the identification of the educational materials step includes receiving audio, video, or multimedia information.

10. The method of claim 5, further including editing the identification of the units, the identification of the assignments, or the identification of the educational materials.

11. A method for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line educational system and for automatically generating a gradebook for the on-line course, comprising:

receiving an identification of units each representing portions of the educational course;

receiving an identification of assignments for the units;

receiving an identification of educational materials for the additional units;

compiling the units, the assignments, and the educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course;

providing an on-line gradebook for specifying grade information relating to the assignments; and

automatically entering the received units into the on-line gradebook for the educational course.

12. The method of claim 11, further including:

permitting users to access the on-line gradebook; and

selectively restricting the users' access to particular portions of the on-line gradebook.

13. An apparatus for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line educational system and toggle between course and author views, comprising:

a display module for selectively displaying a course view in response to selection of a course section and for displaying an author view in response to selection of an author section, the course view containing content for the on-line course and the author view permitting the instructor to develop the on-line course;

a receive module for receiving content for the on-line course while displaying the author view, including:

a module for receiving an identification of units each representing portions of an educational course;

a module for receiving an identification of assignments for the units; and

a module for receiving an identification of educational materials for the units; and

a compile module for compiling the units, the assignments, and the educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, further including a module for displaying a navigation tree in both the course view and the author view, the navigation tree permitting the instructor to access the units.

15.   The apparatus of claim 13, further including a module for displaying course tools in both the course view and the author view, the course tools permitting the instructor to access teaching tools for the units.

16.   The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the module for displaying course tools includes:

a module for displaying a gradebook section for accessing an on-line gradebook;

a module for displaying a course administration section for accessing administrative pages related to the on-line course;

a module for displaying an e-mail section for accessing an e-mail feature;

a module for displaying a chat section for accessing a chat feature;

a module for displaying a document sharing section for accessing a document sharing feature;

a module for displaying a journal section for accessing an on-line journal; or

a module for displaying a links section for accessing links illustrating sources of information relevant to the on-line educational course.

17.   An apparatus for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line educational system, comprising:

a display module for displaying a default syllabus identifying default units representing portions of an educational course;

a module for receiving an identification of additional units each representing additional portions of the educational course;

a module for receiving an identification of assignments for the additional units;

a module for receiving an identification of educational materials for the additional units; and

a compile module for compiling the default units, the additional units, the assignments, and the

educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course.

18.   The apparatus of claim 17, further including a module for selectively providing on-line access to

the electronic syllabus by the users.

19.   The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the module for receiving the identification of the assignments

includes a module for receiving a threaded discussion assignment, a reading assignment, a lecture

assignment, an indication of a file to be downloaded, or an address identifying a network location of

additional content for the educational course.

20.   The apparatus of claim 17, further including a module for receiving an on-line exam.

21.   The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the module for receiving the identification of the educational

materials includes a module for receiving audio, video, or multimedia information.

22.   The apparatus of claim 20, further including a module for editing the identification of the units,

the identification of the assignments, or the identification of the educational materials.

23.   An apparatus for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line

educational system and for automatically generating a gradebook for the on-line course, comprising:

a module for receiving an identification of units each representing portions of the educational course;

a module for receiving an identification of assignments for the units;

a module for receiving an identification of educational materials for the additional units;

a compile module for compiling the units, the assignments, and the educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course;

a gradebook module for providing an on-line gradebook for specifying grade information relating to the assignments; and

a module for automatically entering the received units into the on-line gradebook for the educational course.

24.   The apparatus of claim 23, further including:

a module for permitting users to access the on-line gradebook; and

a module for selectively restricting the users' access to particular portions of the on-line gradebook.

25.   A computer program product, comprising:

a computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to perform a method for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line educational system and toggle between course and author views, the method including:

selectively displaying a course view in response to selection of a course section and displaying an author view in response to selection of an author section, the course view containing content for the on-line course and the author view permitting the instructor to develop the on-line course;

receiving content for the on-line course while displaying the author view, including:

receiving an identification of units each representing portions of an educational course;

receiving an identification of assignments for the units; and

receiving an identification of educational materials for the units; and

compiling the units, the assignments, and the educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course.

26.   The computer program product of claim 25, further including displaying a navigation tree in both the course view and the author view, the navigation tree permitting the instructor to access the units.

27.   The computer program product of claim 25, further including displaying course tools in both the course view and the author view, the course tools permitting the instructor to access teaching tools for the units.

28.   The computer program product of claim 27 wherein the displaying course tools step includes:

displaying a gradebook section for accessing a on-line gradebook;

displaying a course administration section for accessing administrative pages related to the on-line course;

displaying an e-mail section for accessing an e-mail feature;

displaying a chat section for accessing a chat feature;

displaying a document sharing section for accessing a document sharing feature;

displaying a journal section for accessing an on-line journal; or

displaying a links section for accessing links illustrating sources of information relevant to the on-line educational course.

29.   A computer program product, comprising:

a computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to perform a method for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line educational system, the method including:

displaying a default syllabus identifying default units representing portions of an educational course;

receiving an identification of additional units each representing additional portions of the educational course;

receiving an identification of assignments for the additional units;

receiving an identification of educational materials for the additional units; and

compiling the default units, the additional units, the assignments, and the educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course.

30.   The computer program product of claim 29, further including selectively providing on-line access to the electronic syllabus by the users.

31.   The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the receiving the identification of the assignments step includes receiving a threaded discussion assignment, a reading assignment, a lecture assignment, an indication of a file to be downloaded, or an address identifying a network location of additional content for the educational course.

32.   The computer program product of claim 29, further including receiving an on-line exam.

33.   The computer program product of claim 29 wherein the receiving the identification of the educational materials step includes receiving audio, video, or multimedia information.

34.   The computer program product of claim 29, further including editing the identification of the units, the identification of the assignments, or the identification of the educational materials.

35.   A computer program product, comprising:

a computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to perform a method for permitting an instructor to develop an on-line course for an on-line educational system and for automatically generating a gradebook for the on-line course, the method including:

receiving an identification of units each representing portions of the educational course;

receiving an identification of assignments for the units;

receiving an identification of educational materials for the additional units;

compiling the units, the assignments, and the educational materials into an on-line electronic syllabus for the educational course;

providing an on-line gradebook for specifying grade information relating to the assignments; and

automatically entering the received units into the on-line gradebook for the educational course.

36.   The computer program product of claim 35, further including:

permitting users to access the on-line gradebook; and

selectively restricting the users' access to particular portions of the on-line gradebook.

37.   A method for providing an electronic notebook for users to selectively provide information to an instructor for use with an on-line educational system, comprising:

providing on-line content concerning educational materials for a particular educational course;

providing on-line an electronic syllabus for the educational course;

providing an electronic notebook for a particular one of the users permitting the particular user to enter information into the electronic notebook;

permitting the user to selectively identify permitted access to the electronic notebook by the instructor; and

selectively providing access to the electronic notebook by the instructor based upon the user's identification of permitted access.

38.   The method of claim 37 wherein the providing the electronic notebook step includes permitting the user to enter text, audio, video, graphics, or multimedia information into the electronic notebook.

39.   The method of claim 38 wherein the providing the electronic notebook step includes permitting the user to group the information entered into the electronic notebook into particular entries.

40.   The method of claim 39, further including permitting the user to identify permitted access by the instructor for each of the entries.

41.   The method of claim 37 wherein the providing the electronic notebook step includes permitting the user to modify previously-entered information in the electronic notebook.

42.   An apparatus for providing an electronic notebook for users to selectively provide information to an instructor for use with an on-line educational system, comprising:

a module for providing on-line content concerning educational materials for a particular educational course;

a module for providing on-line an electronic syllabus for the educational course;

a module for providing an electronic notebook for a particular one of the users permitting the particular user to enter information into the electronic notebook;

a module for permitting the user to selectively identify permitted access to the electronic notebook by the instructor; and

a module for selectively providing access to the electronic notebook by the instructor based upon the user's identification of permitted access.

43. The apparatus of claim 42 wherein the module for providing the electronic notebook includes a module for permitting the user to enter text, audio, video, graphics, or multimedia information into the electronic notebook.

44. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the module for providing the electronic notebook includes a module for permitting the user to group the information entered into the electronic notebook into particular entries.

45. The apparatus of claim 44, further including a module for permitting the user to identify permitted access by the instructor for each of the entries.

46. The apparatus of claim 41 wherein the module for providing the electronic notebook includes a module for permitting the user to modify previously-entered information in the electronic notebook.

47. A computer program product, comprising:

a computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to perform a method for providing an electronic notebook for users to selectively provide information to an instructor for use with an on-line educational system, the method including:

providing on-line content concerning educational materials for a particular educational course;

providing on-line an electronic syllabus for the educational course;

providing an electronic notebook for a particular one of the users permitting the particular user to enter information into the electronic notebook;

permitting the user to selectively identify permitted access to the electronic notebook by the instructor; and

selectively providing access to the electronic notebook by the instructor based upon the user's identification of permitted access.

48. The computer program product of claim 47 wherein the providing the electronic notebook step includes permitting the user to enter text, audio, video, graphics, or multimedia information into the electronic notebook.

49. The computer program product of claim 48 wherein the providing the electronic notebook step includes permitting the user to group the information entered into the electronic notebook into particular entries.

50. The computer program product of claim 49, further including permitting the user to identify permitted access by the instructor for each of the entries.

51. The computer program product of claim 47 wherein the providing the electronic notebook step includes permitting the user to modify previously-entered information in the electronic notebook.

52. A method for providing a calendaring function for use with an on-line educational system, comprising:

providing on-line content concerning educational materials for a particular educational course;

providing on-line an electronic syllabus specifying units related to the content for the educational course; and

providing an on-line calendar, electronically integrated with the syllabus, for automatically specifying dates for the educational course based upon the syllabus.

53. The method of claim 52 wherein the providing the on-line calendar step includes automatically updating the specified dates based upon changes in the syllabus.

54. The method of claim 52, further including displaying the specified dates and corresponding units of the syllabus.

55. The method of claim 52, further including specifying the dates based upon user-entered date information.

56. An apparatus for providing a calendaring function for use with an on-line educational system, comprising:

a module for providing on-line content concerning educational materials for a particular educational course;

a module for providing on-line an electronic syllabus specifying units related to the content for the educational course; and

a module for providing an on-line calendar, electronically integrated with the syllabus, for automatically specifying dates for the educational course based upon the syllabus.

57.   The apparatus of claim 56 wherein the module for providing the on-line calendar includes a module for automatically updating the specified dates based upon changes in the syllabus.

58.   The apparatus of claim 56, further including a module for displaying the specified dates and corresponding units of the syllabus.

59.   The apparatus of claim 56, further including a module for specifying the dates based upon user-entered date information.

60.   A computer program product, comprising:

a computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to perform a method for providing a calendaring function for use with an on-line educational system, the method including:

providing on-line content concerning educational materials for a particular educational course;

providing on-line an electronic syllabus specifying units related to the content for the educational course; and

providing an on-line calendar, electronically integrated with the syllabus, for automatically specifying dates for the educational course based upon the syllabus.

61.   The computer program product of claim 60 wherein the providing the on-line calendar step includes automatically updating the specified dates based upon changes in the syllabus.

62.   The computer program product of claim 60, further including displaying the specified dates and corresponding units of the syllabus.

63.   The computer program product of claim 60, further including specifying the dates based upon user-entered date information.

64.   A method for providing searching for an on-line course in an on-line educational system, comprising:

    providing content concerning educational materials for a particular on-line educational course;

    providing on-line an electronic syllabus for the educational course; and

    providing a searching feature for the on-line educational course, including:

        receiving a search query,

        searching the content for the query, and

        specifying results of the searching.

65.   The method of claim 64 wherein the providing content step includes providing features for specifying content, including units, a document sharing feature, an on-line journal, or links identifying documents.

66.   The method of claim 65 wherein:

    the receiving step includes receiving an identification of one of the features in which to search; and

the searching step includes searching the content in the identified feature for the query.

67.   An apparatus for providing searching for an on-line course in an on-line educational system, comprising:

a module for providing content concerning educational materials for a particular on-line educational course;

a module for providing on-line an electronic syllabus for the educational course; and

a module for providing a searching feature for the on-line educational course, including:

a receive module for receiving a search query,

a search module for searching the content for the query, and

a results module for specifying results of the searching.

68.   The apparatus of claim 67 wherein the module for providing content includes a module for providing features for specifying content, including units, a document sharing feature, an on-line journal, or links identifying documents.

69.   The apparatus of claim 68 wherein:

the receiving module includes a module for receiving an identification of one of the features in which to search; and

the search module includes a module for searching the content in the identified feature for the query.

70.   A computer program product, comprising:

a computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to perform a method for providing searching for an on-line course in an on-line educational system, the method including:

provding content concerning educational materials for a particular on-line educational course;

providing on-line an electronic syllabus for the educational course; and

providing a searching feature for the on-line educational course, including:

receiving a search query,

searching the content for the query, and

specifying results of the searching.

71.   The computer program product of claim 70 wherein the providing content step includes providing features for specifying content, including units, a document sharing feature, an on-line journal, or links identifying documents.

72.   The computer program product of claim 71 wherein:

the receiving step includes receiving an identification of one of the features in which to search; and

the searching step includes searching the content in the identified feature for the query.

73.   A screen for use in electronically displaying information for use by instructors of on-line educational courses to view and access information concerning the courses, comprising:

a screen for display on a display device;

a navigation section in the screen for permitting selection of units of the on-line educational course;

a course tools section in the screen for permitting selection of electronic tools related to the information for the on-line educational course;

a content section for displaying the information for the on-line educational course; and

a toggle section for permitting switching between a course view in which course-related information for the on-line educational course is displayed in the content section and an author view in which instructor-related information for the on-line educational course is displayed in the content section.

74. The screen of claim 73 wherein the toggle section includes an author section for permitting selection of the author view and a course section for permitting selection of the course view.